

Flood Preparedness

Last Updated Wednesday, 05 July 2006

Boulder is the #1 flash flood risk community in Colorado

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Before a Flood

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During a Flood

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After a Flood

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Benefits of Floods

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Flood Information Links

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Floodplain Maps

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Flood Insurance

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Flood Mitigation Projects

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Flood Plan Update

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Boulder's Natural Hazards

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Floodplain Development Permit

Floods can happen with as little as 45 minutes of warning - or less!

Keep track of the weather around you and know the dangers. Tune to cable Channel 8, KOA 850 AM or monitor the city emergency information line at 303-441-4300 for emergency condition updates. Visit Flood Safety for some of the most up-to-date material on flooding and flood safety in Colorado, including:

- Videos;
- Interactive maps of Boulder's flood plains;
- Information on historical flooding in the Boulder region; and
- Information on how to protect your property.

If you live, work or play in Boulder you are at risk. The city of Boulder has the greatest potential for loss of life from flash flood of any community in Colorado. This is largely due to the city's location at the mouth of Boulder Canyon and the number of people who live and work in the Boulder Creek floodplain. Other drainage basins in Boulder County are vulnerable to flash flooding as well. Flood season lasts from April 1 to September 30, but floods can happen any time.

Understanding the dangers of flooding and flash flooding, and knowing the immediate actions to take can save lives.

Important items to know:

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Flash Flood Watch means it is possible that weather conditions will cause flash flooding in the specified area. Be alert and prepared for a flood emergency.

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Flash Flood Warning means flash flooding is occurring or is imminent in the specified area. Move to higher ground immediately.

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Flash floods are the greatest danger for Boulder. They can be caused by the sudden storms that are not uncommon along the Front Range. Three inches of rain in a few hours could be all it takes.

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Floods usually happen over a longer period of time and can be caused by rapid snowmelt or rainstorms.

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Urban floods result from heavy rains and cause street flooding. The lack of plants and soil to absorb the water in many cities causes drainage systems to back up.

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A floodplain is any land in danger of flooding from a 100-year flood.

What's my risk?

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If you are in a 100-year floodplain you have a 1 percent chance of being flooded in any given year.

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It only takes 3 inches of rain over a few hours to trigger a 100-year flood.

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Your home and place of work may be in the floodplain. Check Boulder's floodplain map to determine if you live or work in a floodplain.

Historical flooding along the Front Range

Boulder hasn't had a major flood recently, but it's a question of when and not if.

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In 1997, the Fort Collins flood caused \$200 million in damage and claimed five lives. The flood was caused by a storm that dumped 14.5 inches of rain. Storms of this magnitude aren't uncommon along the Front Range, yet flooding in Boulder can occur with only 3 inches of rainfall.

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In 1976, the Big Thompson flood claimed over 300 houses and over 130 lives when 12 - 14 inches of rain fell in the canyon along Highway 34. The canyon is very similar to the canyons just west of Boulder.

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[Learn more about regional flooding from the city of Fort Collins.](#)

[View the Flood Watch video on Channel 8 \(streaming video\)](#)